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TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 135797

STADIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 135797 ACTION BANGKOK CANBERRA
HONG KONG JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR MANILA PEKING PHNOM
PENH RANGOON SAIGON SEOUL SINGAPORE TOKYO VIENTIANE
WELLINGTON SUVA (SUVA BY POUCH) 24 JUNE.

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 135797

STADIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, XC

SUBJECT: PRC RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

REFS: A) MANILA 6127, B) HONG KONG 6603

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: IN RECENT MEETING, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY INGERSOLL AND BUREAU OFFICERS DISCUSSED QUESTION
OF PRC RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA, BEYOND INDOCHINA,
INCLUDING A) PRC GOALS IN REGION AND HOW THEY WILL BE

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PURSUED, B) LIKELY SEA REACTION TO PRC ATTEMPTS EXTEND ITS
INFLUENCE, C) IMPLICATIONS OF PRC POLICIES FOR U.S.
INTERESTS IN REGION, AND D) NATURE OF U.S. RESPONSE.
FOLLOWING ARE EA BUREAU VIEWS ON THIS ISSUE, WHICH HAVE

BEEN REVIEWED BY S/P AND INR. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

2. PRC OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: FOR THE MOMENT, AND INDEED FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE, MAJOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRE-OCCUPATIONS OF PRC WILL BE SECURITY OF ITS TERRITORY AND RIVALRY WITH SOVIET UNION. PRC POLICIES IN SEA, REFLECTING THOSE PREOCCUPATIONS, WILL HAVE ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE CAST. WHILE PEKING WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LIKE TO TURN SEA INTO AN AREA DEFERENTIAL TO PRC VIEWS AND INCAPABLE OF POSING PROBLEMS FOR CHINA, IT IS NOT NOW, NOR WILL IT SOON BE, REMOTELY ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS. PRC CAPABILITIES VIS-A-VIS SEA, AND ITS PERCEPTIONS OF OBTAINABLE OBJECTIVES IN REGION MAY WELL CHANGE WITH CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. FOR

EXAMPLE, DIMINUTION IN SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY--WHICH WOULD ALLOW PRC TO DEVOTE GREATER ATTENTION TO SEA, INCREASED TENSIONS WITHIN THE REGION, OR LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN THE PRC COULD RESULT IN MORE AMBITIOUS AND DESTABILIZING POLICIES THAN THOSE WE NOW DISCERN OR CONSIDER LIKELY IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. PRC'S MAJOR PRESENT GOAL, IN CONTEXT OF REGIONAL SITUATION WHICH CONTINUES TO EVOLVE IN DIRECTIONS FAVORABLE TO CHINESE INTERESTS IS RELATIVELY LIMITED: TO ESTABLISH SUFFICIENT INFLUENCE IN REGION TO INSURE THAT IT CAN A) PLAY A ROLE, ALONG WITH OTHER MAJOR POWERS, IN SHAPING POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE REGION AND DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF ANY INTRA-REGIONAL CONFLICTS; AND B) PRECLUDE POSSIBILITY OF ANY POWER--WITHIN SEA OR WITHOUT--OR COMBINATION OF POWERS FROM THREATENING PRC FROM THAT QUARTER. AT SAME TIME, PRC WILL ATTEMPT TO LIMIT TO EXTENT POSSIBLE THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER POWERS, ESPECIALLY USSR.

4. ASSUMING PRESENT CLIMATE OF RELATIVE STABILITY IN SEA CONTINUES, AND GOVERNMENTS OF REGION REMAIN INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH PRC, PEKING WILL

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PROBABLY CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE DEVELOPMENT OF STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS IN SEEKING TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE. HOWEVER, THAT EMPHASIS IS UNLIKELY TO ENTAIL COMPLETE ABANDONMENT OF PRC SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCIES OR OF UN-FRIENDLY PROPAGANDA--AS SEA GOVERNMENTS WILL DISCOVER IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY.

5. WE DO NOT BELIEVE OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMUNITIES CAN BE REGARDED AS "FIFTH COLUMN" FOR PRC IN SEA, AND DOUBT THAT THEY FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN PRC POLICIES TOWARD REGION. BECAUSE OF ANTAGONISM AND SUSPICION WITH WHICH THOSE COMMUNITIES ARE VIEWED BY SEA GOVERNMENTS, AND

THEIR HETEROGENEOUS NATURE, PRC ATTEMPTS TO EXPLOIT THEM WOULD PROVE DIFFICULT AND WOULD PROBABLY HINDER RATHER THAN ADVANCE PRC EFFORTS TO ENLARGE ITS INFLUENCE IN REGION. CURRENT STATED PRC POLICY OF ENCOURAGING OVERSEAS CHINESE ALLEGIANCE TO COUNTRIES OF RESIDENCE INDICATES PEKING'S AWARENESS OF THIS. MOREOVER, DESPITE RACIAL AND CULTURAL PRIDE OF THOSE COMMUNITIES, AND EMOTIONAL IDENTIFICATION WITH MAINLAND, THEIR OWN INTERESTS DEMAND THAT THEY STRENGTHEN TIES WITH SEA GOVERNMENTS AND AVOID UNNECESSARILY CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH PRC. (WE ASSUME, OF COURSE, THAT PRC WILL USE SELECTED OVERSEAS CHINESE FOR COVERT INTELLIGENCE AND RELATED PURPOSES.)

6. THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REACTION: WE EXPECT INTEREST ON PART OF SEA GOVERNMENTS IN OPENING RELATIONS WITH PRC WILL CONTINUE, AND POSSIBLY EVEN INCREASE. (LEE KUAN YEW'S RECENT REMARKS SUGGEST THAT CHAIN-REACTION EFFECT WITHIN ASEAN OF MALAYSIAN RECOGNITION MAY BE SOMEWHAT MORE RAPID THAN ANTICIPATED.) THIS IS FUNCTION OF INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE IN REGION, AND ALSO REFLECTS SEA UNDERSTANDING THAT OPENING OF RELATIONS NEED NOT JEOPARDIZE TIES WITH U.S. DESPITE HIGH DEGREE OF REALISM WITH WHICH MOST SEA GOVERNMENTS APPROACH PRC, THEIR ATTITUDES ALSO REFLECT BELIEF, OR AT LEAST HOPE, THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WILL NEUTRALIZE PRC SUBVERSIVE THREAT AND THAT PRC CAN PLAY RESTRAINED AND USEFUL BALANCING ROLE (PARTICULARLY VIS-A-VIS USSR) IN POWER EQUATION OF THE REGION. WE SUSPECT NOTICEABLE DISILLUSION

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WILL SET IN WHEN, AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS, SEA GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZE THAT PROBLEMS HAVE NOT BEEN SOLVED AND DISCOVER THAT HAN CHAUVINISM, WHEN CONFRONTED AT CLOSE QUARTERS, CAN BE EXTREMELY DISCOMFETING.

7. IN ITS RELATIONS WITH PRC, SOUTHEAST ASIA IS MUCH LESS VULNERABLE TODAY THAN IN PAST. SEA GOVERNMENTS, THROUGH EXPERIENCE AND ACQUIRED SELF-CONFIDENCE, ARE BETTER ABLE TO DEFEND THEIR INTERESTS VIS-A-VIS MAJOR POWERS, AND HAVE BECOME RELATIVELY SOPHISTICATED IN PLAYING BALANCING GAME AMONG THOSE POWERS. GROWTH OF REGIONALISM IN SEA IS ANOTHER FACTOR TENDING TO STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS IN DEALING WITH PRC (AND OTHER POWERS), AND WE EXPECT THAT INCREASED PRC DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN REGION WILL ENCOURAGE THOSE GOVERNMENTS TO FURTHER COORDINATE THEIR RESPONSES WHEN AT ALL POSSIBLE, IN BELIEF THAT FOR EFFECTIVE IMPACT, SEA NATIONS MUST PRESENT UNITED FRONT. THUS, PRC ACTIVITY SEEMS LIKELY TO ADD TO IMPORTANCE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS ACCORD ASEAN, WHICH FROM START HAS BEEN CONCERNED WITH POSSIBLE RE-

SURGENGE PRC INFLUENCE IN SEA.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.: WHILE GROWTH IN PRC INFLUENCE IN SEA WILL NOT NECESSARILY REDOUND TO OUR ADVANTAGE, NEITHER SHOULD IT SIGNIFICANTLY THREATEN OUR BASIC INTERESTS, AT LEAST OVER NEAR- AND MIDDLE-TERM. ULTIMATELY, PRC WILL PROBABLY WISH TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE U.S. PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN THE REGION, ALONG WITH THAT OF OTHER POWERS. PRC DOES NOT REGARD THIS AS REALISTIC IMMEDIATE GOAL, HOWEVER, NOR EVEN AS DESIRABLE IN VIEW OF SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO GAIN INFLUENTIAL POSITION IN REGION. AS LONG AS SOVIETS ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN SEA--AND ASSUMING CONTINUATION OF SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE--PRC WILL CONTINUE TO TOLERATE U.S. POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND EVEN

MILITARY PRESENCE IN REGION. CONVERSELY, WE MAY FIND SOME GROWTH IN PRC INFLUENCE A USEFUL OFFSET TO INCREASED SOVIET (AND NORTH VIETNAMESE) ACTIVITY IN THE REGION.

9. OVER THE LONGER TERM, AS PRC INFLUENCE IN REGION GROWS, WE MAY EXPECT IT TO BE USED MORE ASSERTIVELY IN

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WAYS THAT IMPINGE UPON OUR INTERESTS AND THOSE OF OTHER POWERS: E.G. BY ENCOURAGING ALREADY GROWING TREND TOWARD "ECONOMIC NATIONALISM" IN SEA, BY ATTEMPTING TO DRAW SEA GOVERNMENTS MORE CLOSELY INTO THIRD WORLD LINEUP UNDER ITS LEADERSHIP, AND--DEPENDING ON STRENGTH OF ITS OWN POSITION IN RELATION TO SOVIETS IN SEA--BY ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR U.S. SECURITY TIES AND POLITICAL/ ECONOMIC INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. THE IMPACT OF THIS APPROACH ON U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE DETERMINED BY A VARIETY OF FACTORS, SOME OF WHICH ARE UNDER OUR CONTROL, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR THE CREATIVITY OF OUR OWN RESPONSES TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION.

10. THE U.S. RESPONSE: ALTHOUGH ITS POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON U.S. INTERESTS MAY TEMPT ONE TO TRY, INCREASING PRC INFLUENCE IN REGION IS NOT A TREND WE CAN FORESTALL. FURTHERMORE, VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO PREVENT PRC FROM DEVELOPING NORMAL STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS COULD ENCOURAGE REGRESSION TOWARD GREATER PRC EMPHASIS ON SUBVERSION AND SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCIES. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT NATURAL LIMITING FACTORS--FOR EXAMPLE, FEAR OF CHINESE HEGEMONY, HOSTILITY TO COMMUNISM, DESIRE FOR CLOSE TIES WITH U.S. AND FOR CONTINUED U.S. BALANCING PRESENCE IN REGION--WILL INHIBIT RAPID EXTENSION OF PRC INFLUENCE. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, U.S. EFFORT TO COUNTER PRC DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES IN REGION IS NOT CALLED FOR; IT WOULD LIKELY PROVE LARGELY UNSUCCESSFUL, WOULD BE RESENTED BY SOUTHEAST ASIANS, WOULD BE SEEN AS

HYPOCRITICAL IN VIEW OF US-PRC DETENTE, AND WOULD REQUIRE UNWARRANTED EXPENDITURE OF POLITICAL CAPITAL. IN ADDITION, IT WOULD BE LIKELY TO DAMAGE US-PRC RELATIONS. IN GENERAL, OUR RESPONSE TO PRC POLICIES IN SEA SHOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

-- ON SUBJECT OF PRC-SEA DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO INDICATE TO SEA GOVERNMENTS THAT THIS IS QUESTION FOR THEM TO DECIDE, ONE ON WHICH USG TAKES NO POSITION.

-- IF OUR COMMENTS ARE SOLICITED, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD CONVEY TO SEA GOVERNMENTS IN LOW-KEY VIEW THAT
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IT IS ENCOURAGING TO SEE PRC EXPRESSING INTEREST IN NORMAL STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS; AT SAME TIME, WE DOUBT

THAT PEKING INTENDS TO ABANDON SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC INSURGENCIES OR TO COMPLETELY ESCHEW OTHER UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACHES.

-- OUR GOAL SHOULD BE POSITIVE ONE OF MAINTAINING STRONG TIES WITH SEA GOVERNMENTS, RATHER THAN NEGATIVE ONE OF SEEKING TO LIMIT PRC INFLUENCE, AND WE SHOULD NOT AS RULE RELATE OUR ACTIONS TO SEA GOVERNMENTS' POLICIES TOWARD PRC.

-- AND, FINALLY, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE NORMALIZATION OF OUR OWN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH PRC, WHICH WE BELIEVE BENEFICIAL TO SECURITY AND STABILITY OF REGION AND IN INTERESTS OF SEA NATIONS AS WELL AS OUR OWN. KISSINGER UNQUOTE SISCO

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